

REMARKS

This responds to the Office Action dated July 31, 2006. Claims 1 and 9 are amended, no claims are canceled, and no claims are added; as a result, claims 1 and 3-21 remain pending in this application.

§102 Rejection of the Claims

Claims 1, 3, 4 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) for anticipation by Dinsdale (U.S. Patent No. 4,732,061). Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are distinguishable over Dinsdale for at least the following reasons.

The rejection states that Dinsdale discloses a “force amplifying linkage 144, 145, 150, 152). However, Applicant is unable to find in Dinsdale a first camming linkage and a second camming linkage wherein the first camming linkage and the second camming linkage have a range of motion sufficient to grip a coupling portion of a drill stem, while preventing damage to a portion of the drill stem narrower than the coupling portion. Applicant is also unable to find a first camming linkage and a second camming linkage wherein full extension of the first camming linkage and the second camming linkage results in a jaw spacing that is smaller than a diameter of a drill stem coupling portion and larger than a diameter of a middle of a drill stem section.

In contrast, claim 1 as amended includes a first camming linkage and a second camming linkage wherein the first camming linkage and the second camming linkage have a range of motion sufficient to grip a coupling portion of a drill stem, while preventing damage to a portion of the drill stem narrower than the coupling portion.

Because the Dinsdale reference does not show every element of Applicant’s independent claims, a 35 USC §102(b) rejection is not supported. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested with respect to claims 1, 3, 4 and 20.

§103 Rejection of the Claims

Claims 9-11 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lam (U.S. Patent No. 4,703,811) or Bischel et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0157870) or Willis (U.S. Patent No. 4,403,666) in view of Dinsdale (U.S. Patent No. 4,732,061).

Applicant respectfully submits that the additional references of Lam, Bischel, and Willis fail to cure the rejection based on Dinsdale for at least the reasons outlined above.

Because the cited references, either alone or in combination, do not show every element of Applicant's independent claims, a 35 USC §103(a) rejection is not supported by the references. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested with respect to claims 9-11 and 21.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 5-8 and 12-19 were allowed. Applicant acknowledges the indication of allowability.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance and notification to that effect is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone Applicant's attorney (612) 373-6944 to facilitate prosecution of this application.

If necessary, please charge any additional fees or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-0743.

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By his Representatives,

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CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 1.8: The undersigned hereby certifies that this correspondence is being filed using the USPTO's electronic filing system EFS-Web, and is addressed to: Commissioner of Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on this 31 day of October, 2006.

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Signature